

# Los Angeles Times

## Inexpensive, terrific wines for everyday dinners

What is a Tuesday Night Wine? A friend used the term one evening as we were sipping an expensive wine -- a dense, smoky Côte-Rôtie from the northern Rhone -- for a birthday celebration. Tuesday Night Wine was definitely not what we were drinking.

Her definition: an everyday wine, something that's usually under \$15 or, on a stretch, under \$20. Something to drink with a regular dinner -- meat loaf, sauteed chicken, pork chops, maybe pasta or a stir-fry.

She had her usual picks but was tired of drinking the same wines all the time, so she asked me for some suggestions.

And here they are.

### **2011 Edna Valley Vineyard Chardonnay "Paragon"** (Central Coast, California)

Because I know she likes Chardonnay, that comes first. For three decades Edna Valley Vineyard near San Luis Obispo has been producing reliable Central Coast Chardonnay at an almost unbelievably attractive price. Its 2011 Chardonnay from the Paragon vineyard is medium-bodied, with a scent of white peach and citrus zest. Not overly oaked, it's a great basic to have on hand. Some stores carry its non-vintage Chardonnay for slightly less. Even its limited-release Heritage or Reserve Chardonnays won't break the bank. From \$9 to \$12.



### **2009 Palacios Remondo "La Montesa" Rioja** (Rioja, Spain)

Spain's Alvaro Palacios is that rare winemaker who makes great wine at every price level. This happens to be one of his lower-priced wines, yet the 2009 Rioja from the La Montesa Vineyard has all the right stuff. The smooth blend of 65% Garnacha, 30% Tempranillo and 5% Mazuelo tastes of cherries, plums and white pepper, an elegant Rioja for well under \$20. From \$14 to \$17.

### **2012 Jaboulet "Parallèle 45" Côtes du Rhône rosé** (Rhône Valley, France)

Some days these past few weeks could have easily qualified as rosé weather. And if you're a rosé lover as I am, finding one that's drinkable for \$10 is quite a feat. But I found one: "Parallèle 45" from the respected Rhône house of Jaboulet. Made from a blend of Grenache and Cinsault with a little Syrah, it tastes of wild strawberries and gentle spices. Not only drinkable, it's a bargain at \$10.

### **2011 Uvaggio Vermentino** (Lodi, California)

Uvaggio is a Cal-Ital specialist with over half its production devoted to Vermentino, the aromatic

white grape from Italy (and Corsica and Provence), where it is known under different names. Uvaggio is a project from Jim Moore, a veteran of Robert Mondavi's and Bonny Doon's cellars, and he seems to have a real feel for this Italian varietal. Lighter than Chardonnay, with hints of lime and flowers, it has a summery feeling, lighthearted and approachable. It's a remarkably versatile alternative to Sauvignon Blanc or Chardonnay. And hard to beat the price. About \$12.

### **2012 Elio Grasso Dolcetto d'Alba** (Piedmont, Italy)

An easygoing Piedmontese red from the under-appreciated Dolcetto grape, a sort of younger cousin of the distinguished grape in this part of Italy, Nebbiolo. Bright and polished, the 2012 Elio Grasso Dolcetto d'Alba tastes like sweet, fresh cherries and plums. It's a really pretty wine, with a minerality that gives it depth. From \$15 to \$19.

### **2012 Cline Cellars Zinfandel** (California)

Cline is the go-to cellar for reasonably priced, delicious California Zinfandel. You'll find everything you love about Zin in this bottle -- dark berry flavors, spiciness, a touch of oak. Bring on the bold flavors of barbecue or Mexican food with this one. If you can't find this particular bottle, go for the NV California Zinfandel for about the same price, sometimes less. And if you come across it, the 2010 Cline Cellars Zinfandel "Ancient Vines" is another steal. About \$10.

### **2011 Domaine Terlato & Chapoutier Shiraz-Viognier** (Victoria, Australia)

A fresh spicy Shiraz with a touch of Viognier from respected Rhone producer Michel Chapoutier and Napa Valley's Anthony Terlato. The grapes, obviously, don't come from either France or California, but from vines in central Victoria, Australia. Ruby red, the Shiraz-Viognier is ripe and round, full in the mouth, tasting of red berries, sweet spice and black pepper. And it's priced low enough to make it your house wine. About \$14.

<http://www.latimes.com/food/dailydish/la-dd-tuesday-night-wines-everyday-dinners-20140128,0,7604352.story#axzz2sUE6GHt3>